

PLANNING AHEAD

Notes for the Planning and Policy
Community



US Army Corps
of Engineers

January 2005

Volume 8, Issue 1

A Note from the Leader of The Planning Community of Practice

We in the Corps have had to deal with a lot of changes in the last year, and more are coming. A lot of the change has to do with process. 2012 is a good example, as are the changes we are looking to make in the planning process. The question is why? Why all this change now.

The short answer is because those we serve are changing. Public decisions, through our political processes, already consider many factors in addition to economics. We are looking at expanding our analysis and the basis for our recommendations to all four accounts- not just economic development.

The nature of our product is changing as well. We can expect greater emphasis on non-structural solutions, policy changes(conserving water versus new infrastructure), and more environmental restoration-because the public demands it. Just like the Army, which has had to change to a lighter Army while having an abundance of heavy equipment, we must change to this new approach at the same time we have a number of authorization proposals using more traditional methods of analysis.

The unintended consequences of WRDA 1986 must be addressed. Willingness to pay is an unwritten major criterion for project development, and in some cases, has prevented us from looking at a bigger picture. Watershed looks are necessary to prevent unneeded investment, avoid the pitfalls of piecemeal solutions, and allow things to be done on a collaborative basis. We have some shining examples of success using this approach, including the Upper Mississippi Basin, the Everglades, and others.

Therefore, change is a way of life in the 21st century. In closing, some tips on dealing with change are in order, not that most of you need them. First, I suggest you use and trust your leadership. Talk to your boss and talk to your colleagues about things. Avoid group speak, make decisions based on data. Secondly, look at the Corps track record in taking care of people. It's awesome. Finally, understand that you are needed, which means you must make yourself useful. This means that you must constantly learn, must be flexible, and in some cases, make some significant personal change. The Corps and you will be better for it. Thanks for all you do!

William Dawson

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Corps Castle made of snow in Alaska District

Featured Articles

An Interview with Doug Lamont.....	2
New NRC Report.....	4
New IWR-Plan 2005 Release.....	4
LRD Environmental CoP Conducts VTC on NEPA Compliance Documentation.....	5
Preparation, Planning and Technical Analysis - the Shared Vision Planning Approach.....	6
Nat'l Ecosystem Center of Expertise.....	6
Telling Our Story.....	9
Submit Comments for Resubmittal of the OMB-approved Planning Surveys.....	10
Benefits Transfer-Good? Bad? Ugly?.....	10

Monthly Columns

Cultural Resources.....	11
Nonstructural News.....	11
Planning Centers of Expertise.....	13
Planning Leaders' Corner.....	13
COE Masters Degree Program.....	14
Planning Associates Update.....	14
NEW Planning Webs Ahead.....	16
Planning CoP Calendar.....	16
Announcements.....	16

Want to Contribute?

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See Page 17

Words from the Editor

Happy New Year to all! I am excited to share with you the first issue of Planning Ahead in 2005! With each issue, the Planning Ahead team strives to feature the most current, valuable, and interesting stories. From the featured articles to the recurring columns, we sincerely hope that you look forward to each issue. And if you aren't, please let us know what we can do to make that happen! In an effort to further our goal of maintaining a forum for all to discuss and share your thoughts and stories, there are some new additions to the newsletter.

First, I would like to introduce a new column titled "Planning Webs Ahead" covered by James Conley of South Pacific Division. This column will discuss the impact of the World Wide Web in the planning community. Information provided may include techniques to building effective planning web pages, planning resources currently on the web, and websites in progress that cater to the research and instructional needs of planners.

Because Planning Ahead is a monthly release, we want to be sure each issue stands alone and exudes a different type of energy from the last one, starting with the picture on the front page. This month's picture displays one of the many versions of the Corps castle. (We are all familiar with the red and gold castle logos) To complement this winter season, we feature a picture of a Corps castle made of snow by our friends from the Alaska district. For future issues, we are asking that you send pictures you think would make a great addition to the front page. Please feel free to be creative and even humorous! The Planning Ahead Team will select the best picture to appear in the next month's issue.

Last but certainly not least, I want announce that a member of the Planning Ahead team has been selected to participate in the Corps' efforts in the Middle East. Our very own Paul Rubenstein (HQ reporter for the Cultural Resources column) is now serving in Iraq.

Monica Franklin, Editor
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FEATURED ARTICLES

An Interview With Mr. Doug Lamont

Mr. Doug Lamont was recently selected to be the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Project Planning and Review in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), ASA(CW). His new job will have him making decisions based on many of the reports produced by Corps' planners. Doug was kind enough to take a few minutes to tell us about his career in the Corps, beginning with his first job in the Jacksonville District.

Planning Ahead: *Where did you start your career with the Corps?*

I began my career with the Jacksonville District after graduating with a BA in math and a BS in Civil Engineering from Syracuse University. One of my limnology professors got me interested in the Corps in the water quality and environmental impact assessment arena and, frankly, I was ready to get away from New York winters.

Planning Ahead: *Where did you go next, and next, and next?*

I started in the Junior Engineer Training Program working in various planning and engineering offices in Jacksonville. After I came off the one-year rotational program, I began working as an Environmental Engineer in the Environmental Resources Branch in Planning Division working in their water quality lab and preparing EA's and EIS's in support of studies underway.

After a couple of years there, I applied to the Corps of Engineers Planning Fellowship Program and was fortunate to be selected to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where I received a Master's in Environmental Engineering. After I returned, I was selected into my first supervisory job as Chief of the Enforcement Section in the Regulatory Branch. It was one of my toughest jobs but it gave me a solid background in the Regulatory program and I quickly learned that I enjoyed the supervisory aspect--particularly working with people in achieving a common goal.

I always wanted to work in Headquarters and Larry Devick, who's sadly no longer with us, gave me a great opportunity when I was hired into Programs Division in Headquarters. I didn't realize it until I got there but this was the best experi-

ence I could have asked for coming newly into Headquarters. The experience gave me a broad background in all aspects of Civil Works budgeting and programming which is critical to all our initiatives. I got the chance to meet and interact with a lot of the key leaders in Headquarters as well as the ASA(CW). It gave me the opportunity to experience how the budget is developed and defended before OMB and the Congress.

I then looked for an opportunity to get experience in the policy arena as cost sharing and the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 were beginning to unfold. I was given a great opportunity by the Policy Division Chief, Dr. Bory Steinberg, to head the New Starts Branch. This was an exciting time for the Corps as we entered a new era of cost sharing. In that capacity we were responsible for the development of policy and procedures for new start construction projects and the new cost sharing agreements that were now required under the new Act.

When Project Management was instilled into the Corps and the new Project Management Division was established, I was fortunate to become the Chief of the Project Management Branch. I continued my involvement in cost sharing initiatives, the development of new model Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) for flood control and navigation projects, as well as the development of the regulation on Project Management. We spent a lot of time working in cooperation with national organizations such as the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies (NAFSMA) and the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) in developing partnering initiatives and new models. It gave me a great experience in understanding sponsor's needs and interests.

In 1995 I had the great fortune to again work in the Policy Division under Dave Sanford. I began as the Chief of the Project Guidance and Analysis Branch and then was given the opportunity to head up the Policy Review Branch that replaced the former Washington Level Review Center. Dave also arranged an eye-opening developmental assignment to the Norfolk District as Acting Chief of Planning and Civil Programs. It gave me the opportunity to directly experience what the districts and project managers have to go through in developing and defending a program and meeting payroll, all in a cost-shared environment.

When I returned, we went through several reorganizations but I had the opportunity to continue in the policy compliance review business as head of the successor organizations when Jim Johnson took over as Chief of the combined Planning and Policy Division -the Policy Compliance Support Branch and most recently the Office of Water Project Review. It was during this time that I also had the responsibility to oversee several audits by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and two controversial delegation of authority issues on PCAs and post-authorization decision documents.

More recently, under Bill Dawson's leadership, we entered another new era with the USACE 2012 Reorganization. Things started to fall into place in the spring of 2004 in setting up the Office of Water Project Review, working closely with the Regional Integration Teams (RITs), getting the delegations approved, and getting the GAO audits resolved.

Through it all, I've been blessed to work with the best and brightest folks who taught me a lot about all aspects of policy review from formulation to economics to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Hopefully, I complemented the team with the experience I had gained with PCAs, cost sharing, and WRDA '86 initiatives that gave us a well rounded ability to review and assist the field.

Planning Ahead: Did you always want to be in the Senior Executive Service ranks?

As far as looking to be in the SES ranks, it was always in the back of my mind if an opportunity arose in my field. I really enjoyed being a branch chief in Headquarters, but with Jim Smyth's retirement, that opportunity presented itself. Jim was an icon in the review field and a true professional who set high standards I can only hope to approach. I was encouraged to apply for the position and was honored just to be considered. I was truly fortunate to be interviewed and selected by Mr. Woodley.

Planning Ahead: What do you do now, and how has your career prepared you for it?

My position with Mr. Woodley as his Deputy Assistant Secretary for Project Planning and Review. Without a doubt, this is an exciting job and the best experience I could have ever asked for. In this capacity, I am principal advisor to the ASA(CW) on Corps of Engineers' water resources projects and on its planning and review processes. My office is responsible for providing objective and independent assessments of Corps projects and for resolving issues that might arise during the review of these projects. In addition, I am responsible for providing Army policy direction governing the planning and evaluation of Corps projects. The past 10 years in the policy review function as well as the budget and PCA experience prepared me well for my current position. After 31 years with the Corps of Engineers I will do my best to work with the Corps leadership, Mr. Woodley and the staff of ASA(CW), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to further our common initiatives.

Planning Ahead: *What's the single most important piece of advice that you would like to pass along to planners just starting out in the Corps?*

The one piece of advice I'd like to volunteer is to encourage folks to get a good handle on the budget process and Civil Works policy--they're both driving the show. Become familiar with the guidance, the engineer regulations and circulars, take the training to increase your proficiency in these areas, and most of all, don't hesitate to invoke the vertical team when you have questions.

Now, I'm on my soapbox--I've always felt that we have an obligation to our sponsors/customers but it goes beyond that--we have an obligation to clearly communicate to that sponsor our authorities and policy constraints so things don't get off track. The worst we can do is potentially misinform project sponsors when there are outstanding policy or legal issues that could affect our ability to participate or affect the cost sharing. With new delegation initiatives underway in the post-authorization decision document and PCA arena, as well as Corps Reform initiatives on the Hill, the credibility of our products is in the spotlight. Active quality assurance and quality control, whether it's in the policy or technical area, is critically important. The theme all along since we entered the cost sharing era in 1986 has been to ensure uniform and consistent treatment of sponsors and a key part of this is informing them upfront what we can do within our authorities and policies. My goal is to work with everyone to help so we can get it right the first time.

New NRC Report: Valuing Ecosystem Services

Bruce Carlson, Headquarters

The National Research Council of the National Academies has just released its report on "Valuing Ecosystem Services: Toward Better Environmental Decision-Making". The report was co-sponsored by the USACE, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the US Department of Agriculture.

A four page executive summary of the report is available on the Planner's Web (http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/planner_sweb/docs/valuing_services_final.pdf).

The entire report can be read online through the National Academy Press website: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11139.html>

The report addresses the potential usefulness and practical difficulties of attempting to quantify and value ecological services. It stresses the importance of clearly identifying and framing the type of problem being addressed, linking the ecological attributes to the economic models, considering all relevant impacts and types of value, and focusing on trade-offs related to changes in ecosystem services. The report assesses the current state-of-practice, and provides recommendations for advancing the discipline.

Current Corps policy does not require monetization of ecosystem effects in its Ecosystem Restoration studies, but it does require a demonstration of resource significance and cost-effectiveness to support recommendations for Federal investment. Likewise, policy does not prohibit monetization of ecosystem services, but it recognizes that in practice ecosystem services are rarely monetized, and that incidental services such as flood damage reduction or hydropower are the most likely to be monetized. As with any efforts to develop new benefit procedures, attempts at monetizing ecosystem services would require advance approval from CECW-CP per ER 1105-2-100.

The Corps continues to pursue its interest in improving environmental benefits analysis through its research and development programs and through participation in various interagency forums. Any notable developments will be shared in future issues of Planning Ahead, and this topic will certainly be on the agenda for the Planning CoP Conference in San Francisco in May 2006.

NEW IWR-PLAN 2005 RELEASE

*Shana Heisey, Institute for Water Resources
Cory Rogers- Camp, Dresser, & McGee*

The Institute for Water Resources anticipates the release of a new version of IWR-Plan in FY05. Originally developed as EcoEasy and transformed into IWR-PLAN in 1998, the software has again undergone major revisions to add capability and enhance its usability. The basic function of IWR-PLAN, to conduct cost effectiveness and incremental cost analyses for ecosystem restoration projects, has not changed but the new release provides users more flexibility in how alternatives are formulated within the application. Analysts may choose the familiar combinatorial formulation step that builds

Name	Cost	Output
No Action Plan	0	0
Wetland East	1017	798
Wetland West	2068	958

Figure 1. New IWR-PLAN Data Entry Grid and Icons

derived alternatives from a set of solution and scale combinations or develop them as discrete entities.

Architecturally, IWR-PLAN has been restructured using a scalable framework to decrease its dependency on commercial software. These underlying improvements will make the program more stable, dramatically increase computational speed, and ensure future modifications can be made with as much efficiency as possible.

Users should notice significant improvements to the appearance of IWR-PLAN from the moment the application is started. The look-and-feel of IWR-PLAN has been recharged with intuitive icons and a default data entry grid that opens automatically when the application is launched, as shown in the figure. In

addition to offering an intuitive avenue to access the model's capabilities, this new structure infuses elements of the Windows® standard look into IWR-PLAN, decreasing any potential intimidation users may have experienced when first encountering previous versions.

A Beta version of the new release is expected to be available in early spring. If you are working on an ecosystem restoration project and are interested in joining the Beta testing team, please contact Shana Heisey (shana.a.Heisey@usace.army.mil) or Cory Rogers (rogerscm@cdm.com).

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Environmental Community of Practice Conducts Video Teleconference on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Documentation

Dr. Hank Jarboe, Lakes and Rivers Division

On November 9, 2004, the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) Environmental Community of Practice (ECoP) conducted a video teleconference (VTC) presentation on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Documentation. The VTC was hosted by the Nashville District Office. The VTC was broadcasted to the LRD District and Division Offices. There were an estimated 76 participants in attendance throughout the audience. Tim Higgs, an Environmental Engineer on the Environmental Team in the Project Planning Branch of the Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division of the Nashville District Office moderated the VTC. The Division office opened by presenting an overview of the ECoP topic and provided the purpose and objective of the VTC. The presentation generally covered NEPA procedures and terminology, Corps guidance and policy on NEPA compliance documentation, content of NEPA compliance documents, and NEPA compliance and the Civil Works process. The VTC presentation was followed by a lively question, answer, and comment session among District, Division, and HQ, Environmental, Planning, and Legal staff. The VTC PowerPoint presentation for this ECoP session, an Environmental Assessment template, and NEPA Compliance and Civil Works Process Flow Charts can be accessed from the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division ECoP Knowledge Dispatch website located at <https://dispatch.lrd.usace.army.mil/cop/environmental/>. For additional information on the LRD ECoP presentation please contact Dr. Hank Jarboe at (513) 684-6050 or by e-mail at hank.jarboe@lrdor.usace.army.mil.

Participation, Planning and Technical Analysis - the Shared Vision Planning Approach

Hal Cardwell, Institute for Water Resources

Mark Lorie, Institute for Water Resources

To address the changing nature of water resources management, new technical tools have been developed to take advantage of advances in data collection, management, analysis, and display technology. In parallel, new public engagement processes have been adopted to incorporate multiple values and interests in water resources decision-making processes. The merging of these parallel trends in technology and participation has led water resources planners to embrace the use of transparent and readily-understood computer models to aid consensus building across competing values and interests when making water resources decisions. Different types of computer-aided consensus building methods can be applied to different types of studies - from scoping out problems on a watershed study to determining specific operational policies.

Within the Corps, the Shared Vision Planning (SVP) approach has been developed by the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) and applied in several places. The SVP approach combines the tried and true planning process with a structured public participation process and uses a technical systems model to integrate information from multiple interests into a transparent model to aid Corps planning. SVP can be particularly useful for studies in which there is the potential for significant conflict between stakeholders. It can help participants come to agreement on the facts (i.e., the economic, environmental and social impacts of potential water management alternatives) so that they can have an effective dialogue about values (i.e., acceptable tradeoffs between economic and environmental impacts).

Although computer-aided consensus building techniques such as SVP are by no means standard planning practice within the Corps, initiatives using variations of the SVP technique or other independently evolving approaches continue to emerge. The use of such computational tools (especially as related to plan formulation, hydrologic and ecological system response and accompanying economic consequences) holds significant promise to inform and contribute to collaborative public involvement processes at a watershed or regional scale.

Presently, the St Paul District is leading a Shared Vision Planning effort on a reservoir operating plan evaluation study with the support of IWR. In addition, IWR is working with the International Joint Commission on a Shared Vision Planning study of operational plans for Lake Ontario and the St Lawrence River. Previous work has included water allocation on the ACT-ACF basin in Georgia, Alabama and Florida, and in various watersheds on the National Drought study.

For more information on the Shared Vision Planning approach and on other computer aided consensus building techniques, please take a look at the SVP website <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/svp/svppage.htm> or contact Hal Cardwell (Hal.E.Cardwell@usace.army.mil; 703-428-9071) or Mark Lorie (Mark.A.Lorie@usace.army.mil; 703-428-7245) at the Institute for Water Resources.

National Ecosystem Center of Expertise

David Vigh, Mississippi Valley Division



Introduction

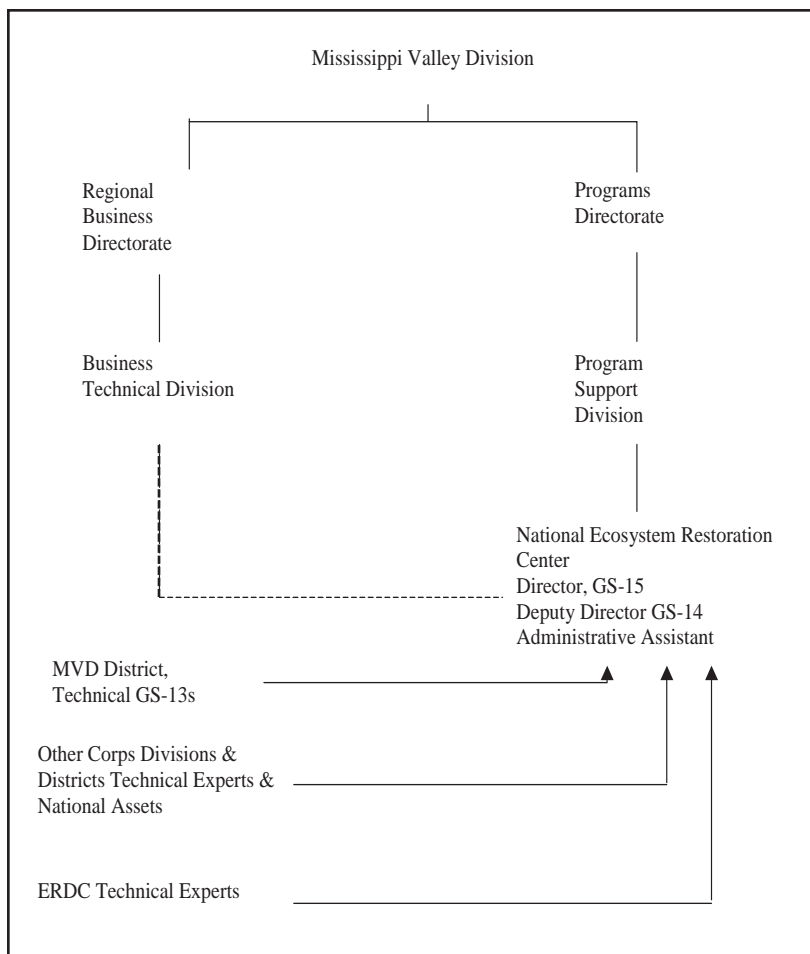
In August 2003, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Director of Civil Works directed the establishment of national centers to conduct larger, complex planning studies for inland navigation, deep-draft navigation, ecosystem restoration, water supply, and flood damage reduction. The national centers are part of a Corps initiative to improve the quality and effectiveness of the planning process for water resources projects called the Planning Excellence Program (PEP). The PEP includes training and work force capability improvement, enhanced quality assurance and control efforts, process improvement and regional and national planning centers. The Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was assigned the National Ecosystem Center of Expertise (ECO-CX).

The ECO-CX will support the Corps ecosystem restoration needs at both the national and international levels. The ECO-CX will serve as a clearinghouse for ecosystem restoration needs, interacting with project delivery teams and matching needs with resources. The ECO-CX will improve quality and timeliness of ecosystem restoration studies by providing services that meet the needs of any customers. The purpose is to develop, maintain and apply the best and most appropriate national and regional expertise and science and engineering technology to the planning of ecosystem restoration projects. The Center will have the following roles and responsibilities, subject to change based on experience, direction and guidance through the PEP.

- Provide environmental and ecosystem restoration planning consulting services at the request of a project delivery team.
- Conduct key environmental analytical components of ecosystem restoration planning studies as requested by customers.
- Provide independent policy and technical review support as requested, to supplement the capabilities of any project delivery team.
- Provide advice to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters (HQUSACE), the laboratories and other stakeholders (partners and sponsors) on significant regional and nation-wide planning and ecosystem restoration issues.
- Assist in establishing research and development priorities in ecosystem restoration planning.
- Coordinate and have oversight of the certification, validation and peer review of planning models for ecosystem restoration.
- Coordinate development of training related to ecosystem restoration planning.
- Develop and manage a program of 'lessons learned' through coordination with the other planning expertise centers, sponsoring workshops, technology transfer, and web based support.
- Support the HQUSACE staff in policy compliance review for ecosystem restoration planning on projects as requested.
- Enhance basic planning expertise throughout the Corps by providing or creating developmental opportunities for employees having specialized planning expertise in ecosystem restoration planning.

Organization

The ECO-CX, based at MVD in Vicksburg, Mississippi, is led and managed by the MVD staff. Oversight of the ECO-CX operations is by the MVD Programs and Regional Business Directorates. The head of the MVD Planning and Policy Community of Practice (CoP) is the Center's Director. The MVD Environmental CoP Leader handles the day-to-day center operations coordinated with the Director, core members, customers and service providers. The core Management Board (MB) is comprised of MVD ecosystem restoration planners and engineers, Vicksburg District senior environmental managers, and senior Engineering Research and Design Center (ERDC) environmental leaders, representing the research and design community. The majority of the ECO-CX staff of expertise will be comprised of regional technical ecosystem restoration planners from the MVD Districts and other ecosystem restoration planning experts from throughout the Corps and ERDC. Eventually, the ECO-CX will include associations with academia, state and private groups with ecosystem restoration planning expertise, including international expertise. Figure 1 below gives a brief diagram about the organization and relationships of the ECO-CX components. The ECO-CX will operate on a reimbursable basis to carry out tasks related to execution of specific customer requests.



Working with the Center

The first step is for a customer to contact the ECO-CX Director, Deputy Director, or any MB member about the desired need. The Director and/or Deputy Director will make a decision as to whether the need generally fits within the services provided by the ECO-CX. If the need can be satisfied by the ECO-CX, the Deputy Director will then coordinate with the customer and the MB and develop a Scope of Work and Cost Estimate. The Scope and Cost Estimate, including schedule and type of deliverables will then be negotiated and set by the Deputy Director and MB (if needed), with oversight by the Director. Part of the negotiations will be locating and arranging national support that matches customer needs. Finally, government MIPRs would be issued by the customer directly to those entities which will provide the services with minor administration and oversight fees sent to the ECO-CX. The service providers could be within the ECO-CX Division or outside the Division, as is determined most suitable for the customer.

The Deputy Director or designee would provide management and oversight of the project action and activities including schedule and deliverables. The Director would provide overall quality assurance. Upon completion of the support request, the customer will be requested to provide a feedback survey of ECO-CX activities with the goal of continually improving and monitoring.

Figure 1. Diagram of the ECO-CX organization.

Management Board

The success of the ECO-CX in providing ecosystem restoration service is having a multidisciplinary core team that can effectively evaluate an array of possible customer projects and effectively match their needs with national resources. The Corps team was assembled using resources readily available to MVD. This is important from the aspect of quick and timely responses.

Title	Name	Office/Function
ECO-CX Director	Buddy Arnold	MVD - Plng
ECO-CX Deputy Director	Dave Vigh	MVD - Env
ECO-CX MB Member	Norwyn Johnson	MVK - Env
ECO-CX MB Member	Ken Klaus	MVD - Eng
ECO-CX MB Member	John Barko	ERDC - Eng
ECO-CX MB Member	Al Cofrancesco	ERDC - Env
ECO-CX MB Member	Chuck Shadie	MVD - Eng
ECO-CX MB Member	Larry Kilgo	MVD - Econ
ECO-CX MB Member	G. Rogers-Sloan	CECC-MV - Legal
ECO-CX MB Member	Barnie McDonald	MVD – RealEst.

The MB members will participate in appropriate CoP and RBC activities. The ECO-CX Director will provide assistance to the RBC and other CoP Leaders by sharing expertise and making staff available to the RBC and CoP Leaders for their activities. The appropriate CoP Leader and/or supervisor may review the team members' Individual Development Plans to ensure that technical skills are being maintained and will be in the rating chain. PDTs may eventually be developed to support each national center of expertise mission area.

The MB will work with all levels of the Corps and with external stakeholders to build relationships and to resolve regional issues in an expeditious and timely manner. The MB will be the primary portal of entry for ecosystem restoration planning. Leader of the Planning CoP will lead and provide overall direction for the ECO-CX and will serve in a dual-hatted role as Team Leader for the ECO-CX MB and the Planning Community of Practice (CoP).

Virtual Team

Once the MB meets and decides how to best meet the customer's needs, members of the national or virtual team will be engaged. From initial requests that went out from MVD in January 04, a list of approximately 150 Corps of Engineer people from around the nation have been identified as potential resources for the ECO-CX.

In addition to the Corps of Engineers members of the virtual team, expertise outside the Corps is also expected to be utilized. This would include laboratories, universities, other Federal agencies, contractors such as A&E or research firms, a list of relevant GSA schedule contractors, Non-government organizations (NGO) such as The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, and even state government and local government resources from around the nation.

The virtual team is the most dynamic portion of the ECO-CX and will require continual updating and work. The national or virtual team list will continually evolve and change. It is anticipated that as more and more national contacts are made, the virtual team will evolve into many different categories or specialties, and the MB will engage only those needed to meet the customer's request. Some aspects of the virtual team are still to be determined or explored.

Communication

The ECO-CX will maintain a communications program in accordance with the May 2003 Strategic Communication Plan of MVD and USACE Strategic Goals in order to keep employees, PDTs and virtual ECO-CX members and other stakeholders and customers informed.

A key element of communication is to conduct timely ECO-CX meetings of the MB and virtual team to discuss status and issues. This will be accomplished using e-mail, phone conferences, small group discussions, and VTCs for the most part, but the team will always try and meet face to face as a first choice.

Information has to be readily available to the MB, virtual team, customers and anyone else with a need to know. The ECO-CX will use available technology to share information with all members and users of the national center. Web support will be very important. The ECO-CX will also use available technology to share relevant information with the RBC, DSTs, RITs, and Districts. Included with the web site will be features such as a 'Hot Topics' bulletin board, a question or suggestion box and a down loadable ECO-CX brochure or other marketing/message tool. The current public web address is <http://el.erdcl.usace.army.mil/ecocx/>

There are many challenges to good communication and these are not necessarily unique to the ECO-CX. The ECO-CX must be able to obtain and publicize information quickly and easily. It must have constant and immediate support with its Intranet and Internet requests. The ECO-CX should proactively anticipate problems, and develop strategies for resolution

and develop communications products to inform audiences and answer inquiries. The MB, project PDTs and virtual teams must clearly and concisely explain reports produced.

International

It is fully expected that over time, and as allowed by law, the ECO-CX will assist overseas efforts such as ongoing Corps efforts in South America, Middle East, Asia, etc. According to contracting laws, COE does work for other Nations under the Foreign Assistance Act (22 U.S.C. 2357, Section 607). Also the Corps can assist other Federal Agencies with their missions in Foreign countries under the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535), 10 U.S.C. 3036(d). The ECO-CX can also be a resource to existing Corps international programs. Many of the agencies, particularly universities and contractors have an international presence. This is an area of the ECO-CX that can be developed as time and need allow.

Conclusions

The ECO-CX will serve as a national clearinghouse for ecosystem restoration needs, matching customer needs with service/expertise providers. The ECO-CX will continue to strive to retain ecosystem sciences expertise in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and to also provide or serve as a technical resource for national and international customers. The center is a living resource with physical and virtual components that will continue to evolve and change as conditions and demands dictate.

Telling Our Story

Clarice Sundeen, Memphis District

All too often in a planners life, writing the technical report or decision document is put off until the end of the project phase when there is little time left in the schedule and no funds left in the budget. Now does that sound like good planning to you?

Here are a few pointers that may help others avoid the crash and burn time in a project's progression:

- Every project should have a Project Management Plan that includes a Communications section. The Project Manager (PM) should state how they plan to tell the project story. Will they write newsletters to inform the public? How will the media be utilized? How will the public be involved in the decision making process? What means will they use to communicate with the non-Federal sponsor, stakeholders, other team members, supervisors, and those invested in the effort? How much will it cost?

- Make sure you allow sufficient time in the schedule to write, review, revise and finalize the document.

- To avoid stress, write the report as you go; keep a living document stored electronically. For example, prior to your first Project Delivery Team (PDT) meeting, write the introduction to the report and give everyone a copy of the authorization, implementation guidance and project map(s). Then, once you've nailed down scope, existing conditions or future without a project, journal it in the report file.

- Use examples of well-written, approved reports available on USACE websites.

- Ensure quality early. Engage the Independent Technical Review Team (ITRT) members when the project starts.

- Document decisions and showstoppers.

- Leave very little to the reader's imagination. Explain why assumptions were made, how risk and uncertainty was factored in, why plans were rejected, discounted, modified or carried forward for further consideration in the plan formulation process.

- Try not to write in passive voice or in first person. Write it at the 12th grade Flesh-Kincaid reading level or below. Use spell-check. Proofread it or have someone else do it for you.

- Make sure what you write in the main report does not contradict what is noted in the technical appendices.

- Enlist the help of a professional technical writer or a veteran planner/project manager if necessary.

- Use After Action Reporting (AAR) at critical stages in project development. As one of my coworkers stated recently, "AAR's are not just used for finding fault, they can also be used as a tool for teaching folks who are learning" (that could be all of us).

The title of this article means more than writing a planning decision document. As planners, we have the responsibility of telling our story when things we do go right or wrong, when we can teach those less experienced in our discipline, when we outreach to our customers and stakeholders and when we need to demonstrate leadership.

Last year I wrote an article for the Memphis Business Journal. It took about 6 months before it was put in print but it is an example of telling our story. At the coaxing of one of our MSC planners, the link is included here: <http://memphis.bizjournals.com/memphis/stories/2004/08/09/focus4.html?t=printable>

Ms. Sundeen has been a Community Planner since 1992. If you have questions regarding this article, feel free to contact her at clarice.d.sundeen@mvm02.usace.army.mil or by phone at (901) 544-4313.

Submit Your Comments For Resubmittal of the OMB-approved Planning Surveys

Stuart Davis, Institute for Water Resources

The current OMB approval for Corps of Engineers Civil Works Surveys expires on 30 November 2005. We are currently in the process of preparing a resubmittal package to OMB to extend our authority to collect data for water resource planning and operations.

This triennial process allows us to assess how well the currently approved package meets our data needs. It gives us the opportunity to develop and approve additional questionnaires, include new questions, revise existing questionnaires, and delete any superfluous questions.

The Planning Centers of Expertise will be engaged in this year's process of assessing the adequacy and scope of approved questions. We also need the help and ideas of planners throughout the Corps. If you are likely to be conducting public surveys in the next three years, your input is essential to helping us develop a comprehensive set of valid survey instruments for use Corps-wide. Please send your comments and ideas to the appropriate center of expertise point-of-contact listed below, so they can consolidate recommendations for their business area:

Inland Navigation: Paul Hanley, CELRD-PDS-P.

Deep Draft Navigation: Ken Claseman, CESAM-PD-FE.

Flood Damage Reduction: Clark Frentzen, CESPDPD-TP.

Hurricane and Storm Damage Prevention: Larry Cocchieri, CENAD-CM-PP.

Ecosystem Restoration: Dave Vigh, CEMVD-RB-T.

Water Management and Reallocation: JoAnn Duman, CESWD-PDS-P.

Since there is not a Planning Center of Expertise for recreation, any input on recreation or recreation management surveys should be directed to the Planning Center of Expertise which represents the primary purpose that the recreation is most closely associated with.

Input for any subjects that do not fall directly under one of the identified project purpose areas should be directed to me at Stuart.A.Davis@usace.army.mil.

You can also contact the headquarters POCs, Bruce Carlson, CECW-PC, for planning studies, and Judy Rice, CECW-CO, for recreation management studies.

To assure that our questionnaire submittal has adequate review time, please complete any submittals by 1 March 2005:

For those not familiar with the OMB survey approval process, the OMB clearance allows us to gather data by administering questionnaires to 10 or more people. The current set of approved questionnaires and associated requirements for collecting data by survey can be found on the IWR website at: <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/omb/ombhomea.HTM>

Remember, all surveys must receive specific OMB approval before they can be administered!

Benefits Transfer-Good? Bad? Ugly?

Susan Durden, Institute for Water Resources

Benefits transfer is a controversial topic. Not just in the Corps, but through out the community of practitioners in government and academia worldwide. Benefits transfer is generally discussed in the context of environmental outputs. Benefits transfer means using values developed at one site for analysis at a different site. Wetlands values and recreational use values are common examples. Benefits transfer is a technique so the acceptability of its use is dependent on the purpose for which it is used. It allows for quick and inexpensive analysis. The similarity among sites must be carefully considered as well as the purpose of the analysis, e.g., initial review or detailed evaluation of alternatives.

Want to know more? Challenge your thinking? Learn about international applications?

EPA is sponsoring a workshop on 21, 22 March 05 in Washington, D.C. titled *Benefits Transfer and Valuation Databases: Are We Heading in the Right Direction?* Presenters and discussants are from government, academia and NGOs in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia. An agenda will be posted soon. You may email Rick Iovanna at EPA (iovanna.rich@epa.gov) to be added to the mailing list or contact me for a copy of the draft agenda. There is no charge to attend the workshop. The EPA sponsored workshops I have attended have been high quality with the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of professionals sharing a common interest.

To read more about this topic, check <http://www.evri.ca>. EVRI is the Environmental Valuation Reference Inventory and contains over 1,000 papers. Its use is free to Federal agencies. A related item is the conference being held this summer by the U.S. Society for Ecological Economics. See the web site at www.ussee.org.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

USACE Cultural Resources Program Review Returns to Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology

The 2005 USACE Cultural Resources Program Review will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah on March 29-30 in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA). The Review will provide Corps team members with opportunities to learn about a wide range of topics on cultural resources, historic preservation and the cultures of native peoples. It will also serve to initiate discussion on the structure, function and objectives of the proposed Cultural and Historic Resources Sub-Community of Practice.

The Annual Meeting of the SAA begins on March 30 and ends on April 3, 2005. This conference will promote scientific interaction, improve research and disseminate information on advanced methods and techniques. As such, it will serve as an important source of professional development for Corps team members.

Attendance at the USACE Cultural Resources Program Review and/or the Annual Meeting of the SAA has been endorsed, subject to workloads and availability of travel funds, by Mr. William R. Dawson, Chief, Policy and Policy Compliance Division in the Directorate of Civil Works.

National Park Service: PUBLIC MEANING OF ARCHEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

"The Public Meaning of Archeological Heritage" conference was held October 27-28 at the University of Maryland Inn & Conference Center in College Park. Participants in the training explored the public meaning of archeological heritage from international, national and regional perspectives. Case studies focused on parks, museums, descendent communities and local communities. Because of the location of this training, many of the case studies were specific to the meaning and interpretation of African American archeological heritage in the middle Atlantic region.

A description of the four module curriculum, of which this training is Module I, may be found online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/SITES/inspire/index.htm>. Module II - "Archeology & Interpretation" - consists of two parts, Interpretation for Archeologists: A Guide to Increasing Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/ifora/index.htm> and Archeology for Interpreters: A Guide to Knowledge of the Resource <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/afori/index.htm>, and trains archeologists and interpreters together in the skills and abilities needed to carry out effective interpretation of archeological resources.

For further information contact Barbara Little at (202) 354-2130 or barbara_little@nps.gov.

NONSTRUCTURAL NEWS

Why Consider Nonstructural Measures In Flood Damage Reduction?

Sometimes the question is asked, "Why should we consider nonstructural measures in reducing flood damages?" This question usually comes from not knowing what the nonstructural measures are and what they can do, not knowing that

nonstructural measures can be justified and implemented, not knowing what opportunities are available with nonstructural measures, and not knowing that the consideration of nonstructural measures is a requirement of legislation and regulation. I plan to cover each of these areas briefly in Planning Ahead. This month's nonstructural focus will be on consideration of nonstructural measures as a requirement of legislation and regulation.

Legislation and regulation related to implementing nonstructural measures for flood damage reduction has been in existence for some time. The following references to legislation, executive order, and regulation are included to demonstrate the historical evolution of the focus on nonstructural measures and/or to document today's requirements relative to nonstructural measures:

Legislation and regulation related to implementing nonstructural measures for flood damage reduction has been in existence for some time. The following references to legislation, executive order, and regulation are included to demonstrate the historical evolution of the focus on nonstructural measures and/or to document today's requirements relative to nonstructural measures:

- The Flood Control Act of 1938 - authorized the Corps "where the construction cost of levees or flood walls included in any authorized project can be substantially reduced by the evacuation of a portion or all of the area proposed to be protected" to expend funds "toward the evacuation of the locality eliminated from protection and the rehabilitation of the persons so evacuated".

- The Flood Control Act of 1960 - authorized the Corps "to compile and disseminate information on floods and flood damages, including identification of areas subject to inundation by floods of various magnitudes and frequencies, and general criteria for guidance in the use of flood plain areas, and to provide engineering advice to local interests for their use in planning to ameliorate the flood hazard." This is the Flood Plain Management Services Program.

- National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 - authorized the National Flood Insurance Program, which has evolved to generally consist of flood insurance, flood plain regulation, and flood hazard mitigation through primarily nonstructural measures.

- The Water Resources Development Act of 1974 - requires of the Corps that "consideration shall be given to nonstructural alternatives to prevent or reduce flood damages".

- Executive Order 11988 dated 24 May 1977 - requires the Corps to implement "action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains..."

- Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies dated March 1983 [P&G] - requires of the Corps that "nonstructural measures should be considered as means for addressing problems and opportunities" in water and related land resources implementation studies.

- Digest of Water Resources Policies and Authorities dated 30 July 1999 [EP 1165-2-1] - requires that "Consideration will be given both to measures intended to modify flood behavior [structural measures] and those intended to modify damage susceptibility by altering the ways in which people would otherwise occupy and use flood plain lands and waters [nonstructural measures]."

- Planning Guidance Notebook dated 22 April 2000 [ER 1105-2-100] - requires nonstructural measure consideration by stating "Section 73 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1974 requires consideration of nonstructural alternatives in flood damage reduction studies."

This addresses the basics of authorization and direction that provides the requirements that all Corps flood damage reduction studies properly address the use of nonstructural measures as sound flood damage reduction tools. Next month's article will focus on "knowing what opportunities are available with nonstructural measures".

Larry Buss can be contacted by e-mail at larry.s.buss@usace.army.mil or by phone at 402-221-4417.

PLANNING CENTERS OF EXPERTISE

Economic Guidance Memorandums

The following seven Economic Guidance Memorandums (EGM) for use during fiscal year 2005 have been developed and are posted on the Civil Works Planning and Policy web site: http://www.usace.army.mil/civilworks/cecwp/General_guidance/guidance.htm

EGM 05-01, "Deep Draft Vessel Operating Costs FY 2005 - General Technical Support Document."

EGM 05-02, "Current Normalized Prices."

EGM 05-03, "Current State and County Income Index Data, Current Eligibility Factor Formula (Ability to Pay)."

EGM 05-04, "Federal Interest Rates for Corps of Engineers Projects for Fiscal Year 2005."

EGM 05-05, "Unit Day Values for Recreation, Fiscal Year 2005."

EGM 05-06, "Shallow Draft Vessel Operating Costs "

EGM 05-07, "National Flood Insurance Program Operating Costs, Fiscal Year 2005."

For further information contact Ted Hillyer at: Theodore.m.hillyer@usace.army.mil.

PLANNING LEADERS' CORNER

Mona Thomason



This month we'll hear from Mona Thomason, a supervisory economist and the Chief of the Planning Branch in Seattle District. Mona started her career with the Corps in 1985 as a college student, working as a stay-in-school (and later temporary) economics assistant in Portland District. After graduating in 1987 from Lewis and Clark College with a degree in economics, Mona was hired in Portland as a permanent employee in an economist career ladder position. In 1989, she transferred to Mobile District, and in 1993, went to Los Angeles District. In 1995, Mona was promoted to the Chief of Economics Section in LA. She transferred to the Corps' Institute for Water Resources in the Washington D.C. area in 1997. In 1999, she moved to her current position in Seattle. In her spare time, Mona reads, gardens, does home improvement projects, and enjoys her daughters' (Katie, 16 and Allie, 12) sports activities. We asked Mona about being a Planning leader and her career advice.

Planning Ahead: *What excites you about being a leader in the Planning Community of Practice?*

Thomason: The many challenges of the civil works planning program and the great people who work on them excite me. Our projects are so critical to so many areas, yet we have innumerable constraints in implementing them. High interest by our stakeholders, particularly sponsors, resource agencies, tribes, and Congressional members, results in lots of opportunities to do really creative work. All the USACE offices where I've worked have been full of highly competent people who have the passion and abilities to work through those challenges and accomplish great things.

Planning Ahead: *What has been the most significant event or phase in your career, and why was it important?*

Thomason: I think that the most significant phase in my career was the time I spent in Mobile District working on the Panama City Beaches feasibility study. It was an important time because I learned so much - both personally and professionally. I left Oregon, where I had grown up and gone to college, and moved across country to a region I had never even visited. Portland District was full of senior professionals, and although I always had interesting work to do, I was the junior economist, so didn't have much opportunity to lead a major analysis. In Mobile, I was given the opportunity to conduct an economic study that was much larger than anything I had ever done before. During that period, I increased my analytic skills using new tools and methodologies and practically memorized the Planning Guidance Notebook and other guidance. I also learned how a high-performing team functions. From the terrific project manager (and plan formulator), Cheryl Ulrich, I learned the fundamentals of project management. Finally, I think that making that significant change in my life led to great personal growth, independence, and maturity.

Planning Ahead: *If you could pass along one best piece of career advice to aspiring planners, what would it be?*

Thomason: I think anyone who works for the Corps of Engineers needs to really think about and make some decisions about balancing career with other interests, like family. Recognize that your decisions will change as your life's circumstances change. Opportunities to learn and grow (like rotational assignments, transfers, special project teams, and long-term training) are available, with opportunities opening up as you expand the geographic area that you consider. If you're interested in those types of opportunities, you need to proactively seek them out and be your own advocate. Let your supervisor and others know what you want. Even be ready to create your own opportunities - I've found that most leaders in the planning community can figure out how to make just about anything happen.

Planning Ahead: *Thank you, Mona.*

COE MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM

The Corps Master's Program in Water Resources Planning and Management is making new strides. Ms. Patricia Mutschler of Headquarters became the first graduate of the 3-year history of the program, receiving an MS Degree from Johns Hopkins University following the Fall Semester, 2004. Congratulations to Pat! Two additional universities are now offering degrees in support of the Corps Master's Program goals: Harvard University and Tulane University. In addition to offering the Masters Degree program, Tulane University is also offering a PhD program in line with the objectives of the Master's program. For those who may already have a Master's Degree, the Tulane PhD offering may be of interest to you. Check out the requirements of all the participating universities at: <http://www.usace.army.mil/mastersdegree/index.htm> and or call the program manager: Dr. Paul Bourget at IWR 703-428-6292. Information about the Tulane program may not be posted at this time. However, the Point of Contact at Tulane is Dr. V.J. Gopu, Chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (vgopu@tulane.edu, 504-865-5779).

It's a new year and many of us have made New Year's Resolutions. Was your resolution aimed at furthering your education and your career? Consider the Corps Master's Program from any one of the participating universities. If you're looking for a PhD in Water Resources Planning and Management, consider the Tulane program. If you are considering this path, now is the time to start looking into the programs and contacting the universities for the 2005-2006 academic calendar. Please see the IWR Website for more specific information about the calendar. Darrell Nolton, interim program manager.

PLANNING ASSOCIATES UPDATE

Course Manager's Meeting

A course manager's meeting was held the week of December 6, 2004, in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Some new and familiar faces gathered for a healthy workout developing a vision statement, goals, objectives and agendas for this year's Planning Associates class. The Course Managers are the following: Joy Muncy (IWR) - DC Experience; Ken Claseman (SAM) - Deep Draft Navigation; Dave Weekly (LRH) - Inland Navigation; Tom Pfeifer (NAN) - Hurricane & Storm Damage Reduction; Clark Frentzen (SPD) - Flood Damage Reduction; Brad Thompson (MVR) - Ecosystem Restoration; Ed Woodruff and Jim Fredericks (NWD) - Endangered Species Act, Hydropower, and Recreation; Sam Arrowood (SWD) - Watersheds; Carl Borash (POA) - Remote Areas, Subsistence, and Native Alaskan Affairs; Georgeanne Reynolds and Paul Rubenstein (HQ) - Cultural Issues and Tribal Affairs; and Russ Rangos (HQ) as Program Manager, Dr. Judy Morrison as Program Facilitator and Harry Kitch (HQ) as the overall Program Manager for the Planning Associates.

Calm Before the Storm

The Planning Associates (PAs) have had a quiet period since their Orientation meeting in November 04. At the time of this writing, they are hard at work in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, with Team Building and Communications. Next month's Planning Ahead will cover that session. Steve Yamamoto of the Honolulu District is this month's PA Planning Ahead contributor. Steve has decided to share what he feels he has to do to have a successful year as a Planning Associate.



Figure 1. Some of this year's PAs while in Chicago for their Orientation Meeting.

"Aloha from the Honolulu District. As a member of the PA class of 2005, we got off to a great start in our Orientation meeting this past November as described by Jodi Staebell in the December Planning Ahead issue. Unfortunately (or fortunately) there were no PA meetings in December for me to write about, so I'd like to discuss one of our assignments from our November meeting. Dr. Judy Morrison our program facilitator, asked us to write a commitment letter on what we expect out of the PA Program, what we're willing to give up for it and how we plan to accomplish our goal. Here are some excerpts from my letter to myself:

Dear Steve,

Hope you have a great 2005 and get a lot accomplished in your PA Program. Having known you all these years, I would like to interject a few things that I think it would help you obtain a successful year and achieve your goal of completing this program. **STAY THE COURSE - BE COMMITTED!** The PA Program will be getting under

way soon and you need to be focused with putting out your best. This program will allow you to network with planners and project managers from other Districts that you can gain valuable knowledge from. The people you meet during the nine months could one day provide you with future opportunities. **COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PA TEAM and HOME OFFICE PMs.** Don't forget your studies at the office and although you have excellent PMs filling in when you're away, communicate with them. Don't assume they know what you want accomplished while you're away. **BE ORGANIZED.** Start by always keeping your desk clean and remove all the clutter. Maximize use of your planner and set obtainable goals and work hard to keep it. I like your yearly calendar board with all the project milestones and the weekly calendar you print out to keep track of your daily activities. Keep it up! **RECOGNIZE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IN LIFE.** Family, health and friends. Don't forget to tell Alice, Kellye Ann and Evan how much you love them and appreciate all your support. You've already given up some things this year like coaching Evan's baseball team and not going to UH sporting events, so it's okay to spend some quality family time with them when you're in between PA sessions; take in a picnic, go to the beach, or just watch a family movie....just make sure it's in your planner. Eat healthy, exercise regularly, especially while you're away from home. You've got some good exercise PA buddies in Pat and Boni. Invite your friends over for dinner once in a while....just remember to let Alice know....and make sure it's in your planner.

Anyway, that's all I can think of for now. I know you'll do well as long as you stay committed. Make me proud of you! Your friend, Steve"



Figure 2. Bruce Sexauer and Kristine Allaman from HQ

What are they doing now?

This month, I asked Bruce Sexauer, Alaska District, PA Class of 2003 to reflect on what the PA Program has done for him.

"Being in the first class of the revamped PA was a tremendous experience. The best perspective I gained was the insight into which challenges are prevalent throughout the Corps, and which are more regional in nature. Understanding that planners in Galveston and Tampa face the same issues as those in New Jersey and Portland has helped me discern at what level specific issues ought be addressed. Being part of the PA program also has given me the opportunity to join up in assisting with the Civil Works Orientation PROSPECT course, through which I get to team up with others that share the same desire I have for sharing the good work we do in the Corps Civil Works arena.

Since graduation, my wife and I moved our family to Anchorage, Alaska. My new job, as a Senior Plan Formulator for the Alaska District, is taking me across Alaska investigating small boat harbors, shore protection, Native Alaskan village relocation, and even building a bridge over the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet. Though many of my projects are less than traditional, I still get to use the very planning principles that I have learned, and have had hammered into me, through the PA program and my career as a Planner. *Bruce and Linda Sexauer reside in Anchorage, Alaska with their four children.*

PLANNING WEBS AHEAD

Search Engines

Effectively using the Internet begins with search engines, as there are billions of web pages, millions added daily. At best, search engines encounter only about a third of the available web pages. Getting commercially "noticed" is a war, since the web follows a "power law--the rich keep getting richer!" When developing planning web pages, it is helpful to be aware of the web's underlying structure. A place to watch the raging battles and learn about search engines is at the <http://searchenginewatch.com> site.

Planning web pages when combined with other techniques in a communications plan are an effective study tool. Good initial steps for developing effective web pages are available on the Usability.gov pages at <http://www.usability.gov/methods/index.html>.

Search engines prominently display the excellent Portland District's web pages--<http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/>--when searching the Corps of Engineers. In an e-mail, Portland District's Matt Rabe replied that "We take great care to ensure we place usable, current and relevant information...about projects that impact people." And consistent with the Usability.gov site, Matt advises others to "Really think about what you want to achieve, lay it out in an easy to use outline, pack it full and make it a repository for all your study documents." Success breeds success on the web, and the Portland District's site is a great example to follow.

PLANNING CoP CALENDAR

Planning Advisory Board Conference call.....second and fourth Fridays every month.

Planning Ahead submission deadline.....third Thursday every month

2004 Planning Awards nominations due.....February 2005

American Planning Association Annual Conference, San Francisco.....March 2005

2004 Planning Award winners selected.....April 2005

Planning Centers of Expertise Leaders' Meeting.....Spring 2005

Request for 2006 Planning Associate nominations.....June 2005

If you would like to post an item to the monthly calendar, please contact Monica Franklin at Monica.A.Franklin@usace.army.mil.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Navigation Economics Technologies (NETS) Website Debuts

<http://www.corpsnets.us>. The site is designed to provide the public with up-to-date, in-depth information on NETS research studies, as well as general information about the program. The web site includes 1-page fact sheets about each study, progress reports, presentations, final products and other valuable information. The site will be regularly updated to reflect the latest developments.

There is also a NETS e-newsletter available at: <http://www.corpsnets.us/NETSnews.html>

IWR-Plan 2005 Release Seeking Testers

If you are working on an ecosystem restoration project and are interested in joining the Beta testing team, contact Shana

Heisey at shana.a.Heisey@usace.army.mil or Cory Rogers at rogerscm@cdm.com.

Vacancy Announcement Interdisciplinary GS-15

This position is scheduled to open 25 Jan - 24 Feb 05. This is for the Chief, Office of Water Project Review position that was recently vacated by Doug Lamont. Announcement number is NCFL05372760. To get a copy of announcement go to www.cpol.army.mil <http://www.cpol.army.mil>.

Remember, this column depends on you, so please send your announcements to Monica Franklin at: monica.a.franklin@usace.army.mil.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO *PLANNING AHEAD*?

This newsletter is designed to improve the communication among all the planners and those we work with throughout the Corps. We hope that future editions will have mostly information and perspective from those of you on the front lines in the districts. We hope that these notes become a forum for you to share your experiences to help all of us learn from each other. We can't afford to reinvent the wheel in each office. We welcome your thoughts, questions, success stories, and bitter lessons so that we can share them on these pages. The articles should be short (2-3 paragraphs) except in some cases where you just have to say more, and should be a MS Word document. We highly encourage that you send pictures to accompany your article.

The deadline for material for the next issue is 18 February 2005.

Planning Ahead is an unofficial publication authorized under AR 25-30. It is published by the Policy Division, Directorate of Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 441 G. St. NW, Washington, DC 20314-1000
www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwp/news/news.htm

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(Editor's Note: In the email address, the character following the @ sign is a lowercase "l". This is also true for the single line of text. The character immediately following "subscribe" is also a lowercase "l". If these are not typed correctly, you will receive an error message.)

To obtain a 'help' file, send only the word 'help' in the text of the message (nothing in the subject line) and address it to majordomo@usace.army.mil.

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Monica Franklin	<i>Announcements, Planning CoPCalendar</i>	Institute for Water Resources
Ted Hillyer	<i>Planning Centers of Expertise</i>	Institute for Water Resources
Joy Muncy	<i>Planning Associates Update</i>	Institute for Water Resources
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Ken Orth	<i>Planning Leaders' Corner</i>	Institute for Water Resources
Paul Rubenstein	<i>Cultural Resources</i>	Headquarters

To read past issues of Planning Ahead, visit:
<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwp/news/news1.htm>